10/31/71

Dear Js,

This was the weeks that was - for me. While Lil takes here usual half-hour to get up, I want to make a few notes on it.

Even the weath was unusual for this part of the country. This morning it is so mild I haven'tput a shirt on. Because of the emotion strains of the week, which had climaxed, I spent much of yesterday outside, working at what for a younger man would have been light work. After fixing an old mower, an hour and a half before a late lunch mowing grsss. I do not ever remember doing it this late in the year. Then a bit of letter-writing, then Lil into town, and then, until 6:30 working withe the machete in an area I had cleared only to have vigorous and determined nature recapture it by chigger. They had so beset me duing the summer I couldn't work there. The growth of some of the locusts, and it is they I went after, plus a few floribunda or multifora roses, whichever it is that grows more vigorously and with smaller blloms, is incredible. There were several more than two inches on the butt and higher than 10 feet. My hands are a mess, if you can recall this species from your farm boyhood. They have thorns, and some are more than a half-inch long. It was great for me, especially because the week had worn and torn my mind so. Lil had marvellous leftovers for supper, some stuffed cabbage which was even better reheated. And there is a story of stuffed cabbage of this week. As usual, we ate to the evening TV news. The last thing I remember, and it is with some difficulty that it came back, is a buchn of stuffer liberal shirts and a right-winger no-bothing of some local journalistic eminence (Crosby Noyes of The Eevening Star) pantificating about the Nixon stupidity - policial brilliance to Noyes-with China/UN/Congress?Foreign Aid. At 10:30 I came to. more of less, so stiff I could barely move, with much of the glass of port I'd strater there. Slowly, as it became possible for me to move, I consumed it, but I awakened bu little. When I could stagger, it was into bed, where Lil had gone to knit and look at some crap on TV, an old movie, and knit without disturbing me (progress report: about half way). In notime, with the sound no disturbance, dead to the world until 4, when I got up. I walked around a bit, smoked a cigarette and although this consituted a night's sleep, a rather long one for me, I decided to go back to bed. It took some time to fall asleep again, because much remains on my mind, but I did, until after daylight. I can't remember when it happened, but I was asleep, in one form and position or another, for half a day. It always tires me to get what for others is less than a night's sleep, and I move in staggers, but it feels great and I think my mind is clear now.

The stuffed cabbages part is a funny thing about a coincidence. We were expecting a guest, for whom Lil decided to prepare the meal a day in advance. While she was doing this I was going over that day's mail. You may remember I had been asked to collaborate on a book by a write who is a stranger, in Mexico, on the Joel Kaplan case. At one point in this correspondence she had apologized for what she thought would appear as its disjointed character, explaining that she divided herself between a number of thin s, a job with the foreign correspondents assn, two growing kids (she's divorced), and as of that time, stuffing cabbage. I asked, naturally, how one named Gonzalez comes to be stuffing cabbages, and in the letter I got that day she explained that before Gonzalez she was Fishbine, that being the Anglicized form of her father's name, that her father and mother were both refugees from Odessa who met and married in London, where she was born, before they moved to NYU, And she asked if a mind-blowing byline wouldn't be Fishbine-Gonzalez (I suppose really in Latin Amer. it would be the reverse, Gonzalez Fishbine.

In addition to the standard load of problems, these are a few new one of the past week. The government made clear that it had been dealing with me treacherously in my damage suit by dumping a load of incredibly detailed interrogatories on me, their harrassing nature obvious, their intent clearly to encumber me, load me down. I've voluntarily supplied most of the answers. So, I wrote the USAtty a long letter of protest, with a carbon for the judge, asking him to pass on the propriety of the letter and demanding that he give the judge a duplicate of the interrogatories marked to show which I had already answered, which

they didn't have to ask, already having the answers, and which I had tried to given them informally (a matter of which the judge has knowledge, having directed the atty to come here for just this). I doubt hem will, and if by the end of this week he hasn't send me a letter daying he has done it, I will, for it will tell the judge that they've been doing nothing but stalling rather than negotiating and that they have done this with clear motives, one being picking the time I'd told them quite candidly I'd be more than usually snowed under with work. This is not a alwyer's approach, but it is mine and we'll have to wait and see how it works. I also accuse them of breach of trust in intimidating one or more of my witnesses (inadvertently, he admitted one), something they'd promised not to do in a meeting with the judge, where I accused them of suborning the perjury of a witness in the case I nonetheless won. They did. He had worked for me on the farm. As a girl, Lil had often played in his home with his girls. When the full import of what he had done, he was a simple man, dawned upon him - he had quit after the trial, embarrassed at having lied on the witness stand - he came to our home, blurted the whole thing out, and never came back, although he lived thereafter for quite a few years.

Then I got confirmation of still another breach of contract by O&D on Frame-Up. My advance condition was clear, and in the contract, that I be given first crack at the remainders. They never told me they were remaindering, and when I had a bid to go on a planned syndicated TV show, Capp's, and consulted with them, they were all for it. But the bastards had alrezdy started to remainder the book. I found out when the supply was gone. As a remainder Marboro cleared out every copy without a single ad or listing. Barnes & Noble had but two copies left when a friend noticed them, buying one and hetting a receipt for me. So you can see the potential if they'd cut the book to $5.00 size, which is what I'd presumed they would, the remainders were sold most anyway, at ~~xxxx~~ $3.00.

There were a few other frustration,s both good things but at the wrong time, too late. Bud has finally read the Ray betweenlines and is sending me to see him, whence I'll go to N.O., where I think the trail will by now be well covered unless he feeds me a few clues, and this will mean having to persuade him to without his understanding fully what I am getting at or more overtly if the first approach fails. I suppose I'll stay near the jail for several days. And here tour machine and your advince on the cassettes will be very useful Jerry will be with me. He and I will stay together. Don't let it worry you. He's only shot one man of whomI know, and he was acquitted, good cause havingbeen established-by Stoner! However, one of my more mercurial informants also dwells in N.O. and a long time ago he was ready to tell me what he had been holding back. He let me know what it is, and in confidence I share it: seeing LHO with a named FBI agent, deBurneys, several times. Here I'll have to cope with the new hazard to him because of the Garrison indictment. I don't know when I'll do either. Much will depend on what I get by mail this coming week from Jerry Ray. Jimmy had told me he was going to send me some stuff via Jerry, but had not told me he had asked Jerry to go there for it. Jerry wrote me. I yesterday learned he is due at the jail today. The Dallas trip is of a different nature, the group of researchers there, three, wanting to establish closer ties with me, the one welathy one, a multimillionaire having done some deep thinking, however a radical of the radical right does this, after recovering from a massive heart attack nobody expected him to survive. He has decided that my work alone has had meaning, etc. He has been a miser all his life and has begun to change. He has, for example, sent his kids to Europe this year. Although I didn't learn of it until 8 days ago, too late, he had like F-U and when he'd heard that I had the contractual right to but the remainders, plates and negative had told the others he'd buy them for me. They never got around to telling me until a week ago yesterday.

Bu the big drag of the week was a real blow, hitting twice in different forms, each costing me a night's sleep. There is a fine young man, finer and of more unusual principle because of his robberobaron background who has become interested in the JFK case in the past six months. He came here some time ago, got copies of the first two parts of PM, got excited, and I showed him some of the material for the last part. He decided to help with it. He proposed that he condense and popularize it and in return also pay for the printing of the original work in my underground format. I accepted, stipulating no terms but fidelity to the work and that the size be that of a $5.00 book. He agreed. His stipulation

troubled me a bit until he expressed a willingness to be flexible. It required the simultaneous appear of the underground full and commercial abridged editions. I feared there might come an occasion that would either require the availability of the work or give ot good prospects, and the Cyril ploy is one of them. He was die here Thursday. His own schedule had called for his having the job done tomorrow. It now turn out that in all this time he has done 35 pages only. And he had been occupying himself with an entirely different book, thus wasting that time. His ego has seized him and he is going to do what he apparently thinks I couldn't. His call was to alert me to what he wanted to do, so I could think about it: interview all the baddies, from McCloy down. He chose McCloy because he can walk form a place he goes to in NYC to here McC lives. Specter, Eisenberg and others he didn't name. This is insanity and he is unreasoning. I told him no. But I auggested a counter-proposal, I'd agree if he did it after the book was contracted, if he'd have some assurance that the contract wouldn't be broken, and if their statements would be included in an appendix. I said that offhand I could think of nothing anyone would or could say that could help the content of the book, that I'd be willong to include, unedited, and denunciation of me, and I suggested that a ter they see what I have some might be inclined to express regreats and go so far as to say that if they had it to do over again, they'd do it differently. At the beginning, he was so modest in describing his role in this project he asked me almost timidly if I thought he should include his name as editor. I told him of course, and prominently on the cover. By now he had an entirely diffferent concept of self and the book, and he has so changed it that while reducing it to six chapters, hw has the second on assessing and allocating the blame, which is hardly the direction and concept of the total work. That focuses on the e idence and the destruction of the case. It does it, let me add, as it has never been possible. And what abpve all blew my mind,he intends to omit the destruction of the most essential evidence!

In all of this he has come to understand that his is the glittering mind, the one alone that has reached understanding, that in six months he has become the master of the fact as nobody else is, and of understanding it as nobody else does. He also has the only infallible comprehension of media, political and mass attitudes (and he expects LIFE to just grab for the hottest stuff, the part he can understand because it requires no thinking). In all of this I see several disasters, and what worried me immediately, because I knew immediately the project was dead, is the ultimate reaction within him when he realizes what he has done. His proposal is now changes. He will require as a condition a contract with a publisher who will advance $10,000 and put that in secrow to guarantee against the breaking of a contract. But rich and brilliant as he is, he hasn't done the simple arithmetic, that no publisher will advance more than half his anticipated royalties unless he is certain of valuable subsidiary rights, and here they do nit exist, although they should, and that this means, with a $5 book, he must be fairly certain of a hardback sale of 40,000. How many books do that? And on this subject? When it was hot only one did, and it took a fortune in ads and promotions for that to happen. So, I had to take him apart, piece by piece, and it lasted until he could take it no more, at 3:30 a.m. He did not tell me what he planned when he left here,but I learned soon enough, because his ego denies him understanding of the bond between me and some of my younger friends. He phoned one still in his teens, of whom he had learned through me, asking two things: a copy of his interview with Specter, for which I had prepared him, and a copy of his book so he could compare my handling of the medical evidence with his. Said youngster politely told him off and phoned me in shock and consternation, shock that one would think of such a thing and consternation because it could cost publication of a work with which he is so impressed (he also told this fellow that he has no srrious disag reement with anything I say in the book, two parts of which he has read at least twice.

Two meanwhiles: Lil is up and about, so I'll knock off, and I heard from Wecht this week. He responded to nothing and expressed not even the slightest curiosity about what mistake I think he may be making. That whole business has led me to a rethinking, as does this current one. I'm finally going to become a hermit. All of this happens at the worst possible time for us. We are absolutely flat broke. This package deal required that I copyright the last part of the book because Ned is showing parts to some of his connections, including a Bowles (and in six weeks has no reaction). That required the expenditure of $$$ for xeroxing, which had to be done from the master for offset. In turn, that impelled me

do it presonally to ;revent damage to the paper and to the small corrections. It took a day, cost $52 said wealthy young man was to repay, and he hasn't. Had we not been paid $70.00 long owed us, I could not have done it. We have an escrow account for the small sums a few people have sent us to pay for the next book we publish. We withdrew $100 from that, and Ned saw me dip into the last $20 to pay for groceries while he was here. He went shopping with me. He has been here, in all now, a total of 8 days, and his wealth and deep concern for people, especially people in poor straits is such that it has never occurred to him that simply feeding him and supplying him with drink (the night of our long talk he consumed more than a quart of wine alone) is a problem.

Lil has long been after me to isolate myself and just work, except for the youngest of those who have become our close friends in this work. So close have some become that they regard us a second parents. One pair came here to be married. With one exception, these are the only ones to realize that entertaining them is a heavy cost for us. That single exception is of our age, a woman from Dallas unknown to you. When tyis teenaged comes here, and he stays and goes through my files for as much as two weeks at a time, his father always sends us enough to take care of the kid's food. And the father's resources are those xxx of a Sears' salesman, which is what he is. So we learn from all of this, and I guess I learn less readily than Lil. Those of wealth, the hell with them. The only people who have ever been thoughtful and generous are those in modest circumstances, and on the few occasions they have helped, it has been a scarifice and has left us warm as well as helped. Confronting survival as best we can, we shall, to the degree I can bring myself to it, isolate ourselves from all but the kids. Those I'll help as they help me and as they try to where they do no. All the senior critics are hungup on various things, with the most serious and sincere on their abdications. All consider themselves elder statesmen with proprietary rights, and all are dated, out of context, out of the mainstream and unaware of the ahenges of five years of serious developments.

Somehow, we'll survive, as we always have. This kind of situation is not new to us. It is a bit worse. During this period I've also had to ask the bank to let me delay the annual payment on principal on that part of my debt they hold. And XXXX I'll find some time to make new efforts to collect what is due me. That is for us an enormous sum most of which we have no chance of collecting. The lawyer may have let the statute run on about $25,000 he had taken on a 50% deal. You know, critics, of that is the right word, owe us more than $2,000? Even Penn Jones, who told me if he can keep his loses to $200 a week hecan continue to live indefinitely on his wife's inhritance, owes me about $250 since 1966 and will neither pay it nor permit her to, having decided in his sick mind that I am some kind of federal agent! The New York, L.A. andSan Diego committes, for example, have not paid for the books they bought. The LA Free Press not only doesn't pay, but doesn't even answer. And has yet to mention my name for the first time.

I'm also going to have to stop trying to keep others from making mistakes. Especially when as with Wecht, if the government sees and exploits the possibilities, it will redound to my personal benefit, for that would make POSY MORTEM a hot literary property. I just can't make the strong-willed think, and I have come to the reluctant conclusions that each aspires to become famous on the heap with a self-conceived cunning that in no case is.

Ned will be sending me a new proposal and whatever it is I'll reject it and tell him to call the whole thing off. Unless he accepts a counter-proposal I have already conceived and I think he will not. It may cost printing of this work, but it is a risk I'll take, for I can't accept of permit what he has in mind. It includes a get-the-Kennedys kick. Exonerate Saint Edgar and the others? As soonas I can get far enough ahead of Lil, I'll go to Dallas unless that offer is withdrawn, and I'll write them to this effect later today. Meanwhile, the impossible awaits the doing again, and as soon as I take a brisk walk in these hills, back to that! I'll carbon you on the first move, already in mind. Best,